

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CARACA 14586 171943Z
ACTION ARA-10

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SUBJ: THIS WEEK IN VENEZUELA

REF: CARACAS 14388 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: IN ARTICLE IN NEW YORK TIMES, PRESIDENT PEREZ
SPEAKS TO THEM OF "ALTERING THE NORTH-SOUTH COLLISION
COURSE." GOV STATES IT HAS AVAILABLE PIECES OF CUBANA
DC-8 WHICH CRASHED OFF BARBADOS OCT 6. AD LEADERS AGREE
TO AVOID DIEESNSION IN INTRA-PARTY RACE. CABINET CHANGE RUMORS
RIFE. WORLD PEACE CONFERENCE MEETS IN CARACAS -- CHEDDI
JAGAN ATTENDS. SPECULATION ABOUT BOEING PAYMENTS. WEALTHY
RANCHER/LAWYER KIDNAPPED. COLUMBIAN ARMY COMMANDER VISITS.
END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT PEREZ ON "ALTERING THE NORTH-SOUTH COLLISION
COURSE." NEW YORK TIMES DEC 15 CARRIED ARTICLE ON OP-ED PAGE BY
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PAGE 02 CARACA 14586 171943Z

PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ IN WHICH PEREZ ADDRESSED HIMSELF
TO THE "ECONOMIC COLLISION COURSE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH..."
ARTICLE IS CARRIED IN BOTH ENGLISH AND SPANISH IN CARACAS
DEC 17 PRESS. PEREZ SAID HE WAS NOT MAKING THREATS, BUT
THAT "OUR BROTHERS ON THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT NOW HAVE
THE HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW THEIR GENUINE FRIENDSHIP THROUGH

CONCRETE ACTS." HOW? CONSIDER LATIN AMERICA'S WEIGHT IN WORLD COMMERCE, LINK SRDS TO AID, RAISE GRAIN PRODUCTION AND AGRICULTURAL R&D (THIS APPEAL WAS ALSO ADDRESSED TO THE USSR), REALIZE THAT DCS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CURRENT WORLD INFLATION, AND THUS "ACCEPT REALISTIC INDEXING." PEREZ ENDED BY NOTING THAT OPEC PROVIDES NOT ONLY BARGAINING CLOUT BUT THE MORAL STRENGTH OF THIRD WORLD UNITY AND THAT IF DCS ARE REALLY WORRIED BY OIL PRICE REVISION, LET THEM REDUCE THEIR ARMS EXPENDITURES. IN STRIKING CONTRAST TO MANY OF PEREZ' PREVIOUS THIRD WORLD STATEMENTS, WHICH ARE OFTEN DISJOINTED AND RAMBLING, PEREZ LETTER WAS BRIEF (FOR HIM), AND MODERATE IN TONE. HE DID NOT MENTION CIEC SPECIFICALLY BY NAME, BUT WAS CLEARLY ASKING THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING ON THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE. WE SHOULD EXPECT MORE SUCH APPEALS IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.

2. CUBANA CRASH - DC-8 PARTS BROUGHT FROM BARBADOS.

SPOKESMAN FOR THE VENEZUELAN INTERIOR MINISTRY SECURITY SERVICE (DISIP) REVEALED DECEMBER 15 THAT THE AVAILABLE PARTS OF THE CUBANA DC-8 WHICH CRASHED OFF BARBADOS OCTOBER 6 HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO CARACAS AND ARE AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE COURTS. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, THE PARTS ARE THE SAME AS THOSE EXAMINED BY BRITISH AND VENEZUELAN AVIATION EXPERTS, ERICK NEWTON AND CARLOS ALBERTO FEBRY, RESPECTIVELY. DUE TO LEGAL MANEUVERS ON THE PART OF ORLANDO BOSCH'S LAWYER, THE VENEZUELAN PRESS IS NOW SPECULATING THE CUBANA CASE WILL NOT GO TO TRIAL BEFORE JANUARY.

3. AD: LEADERS AGREE TO AVOID DISSENSION IN INTRA-PARTY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RACE. ON DECEMBER 10 IN A SIX-HOUR MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ, AD PARTY CHIEFTAINS AGREED THAT THE PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORTS BY PATISANS OF BOTH AD SECRETARY GENERAL LUIS PINERUA ORDAZ AND AD CONGRESSIONAL LEADER JAIME LUSINCHI COULD HURT THE PARTY IN THE COMING PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. PEREZ REPORTEDLY CALLED ON THE CANDIDATES NOT TO USE GROUPS OF INDEPENDENTS TO PROMOTE THEIR CANDIDACY AND TO ALLOW THE CONVENTION TO CHOOSE THE CANDIDATE. SINCE PINERUA ORDAZ HAS FIRM CONTROL OVER THE PARTY MACHINERY, THIS DECISION SHOULD REINFORCE HIS CHANCES OF BECOMING THE PARTY'S NOMINEE.

4. CABINET CHANGE RUMORS RIFE. SPECULATION ABOUT CABINET CHANGES IS INCREASING AGAIN. MINISTER OF STATE FOR CORIDIPLAN RUMERSINDO RODRIGUEZ TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE PLANS TO LEAVE HIS PRESENT POST IN THE NEAR FUTURE (HE HAS NOT YET RESIGNED.) PUBLIC WORKDS MINISTER ARNALDO JOSE GABALDON STATED PUBLICLY THAT HE WILL TAKE OVER THE NEW MINISTRY OF ENVORONMENT

IN JANUARY, WHEN IT IS CREATED. GABALDON HAS CONFIRMED
THIS REPORT PRIVATELY TO THE AMBASSADOR. IN ADDITION, THERE A
E
INDICATIONS THAT INTERIOR MINISTER OCTAVIO LEPAGE MAY RELINQUISH
HIS POST AS WELL. REINFORCING THIS RUMOR, A INTERIOR MINISTRY
SOURCE STATED VHIIE MINISTER B
UNI CELLI WILL SOON LEAVE
THE MINISTRY TO RETURN TO AD PARTY WORK.

5. WORLD PEACE COUNCIL (WPC) MEETS IN CARACAS. THE
PRESIDENTIAL BUREAU OF THE WPC MET IN CARACAS DEC 10-13 WITH
FIFTY DELEGATES FROM TWENTY-FIVE COUNTRIES. THE MEETING
PRODUCED THE USUAL COMMUNIST BOILERPLATE ON THE CUBAN
CRASH (A CIA PLOT), CHILE (FASCIST DICTATORSHIP MAINTAINED
BY DINA AND CIA), PUERTO RICO (INDEPENDENCE NOW), ETC.
THE MOST PROMINENT CONFEREES WERE CHEDDI JAGAN, LEADER OF
GUYANA'S PPP. JAGAN SAID SOME NASTY THINGS ABOUT BURNHAM
IN AN INTERVIEW INCLUDING THAT THE BUREAUCRACY HAS BECOME
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PAGE 04 CARACA 14586 171943Z

BURGEON. (CLIPPINGS PUCHED TO GEORGETOWN AND DESK.) A
NUMBER OF RESPECTABLE VENEZUELAN FROM BOTH THE AD AND COPEI
PARTIES ALSO PARTICIPATED AND TH WPC DELEGATES WERE GIVEN THE
KEYS TO CARACAS BY THE AD PRESIDENT OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL.

6. SPECULATION ABOUT BOEING PAYMENTS. NEW THAT THE
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION (SEC) IS INVESTIGATING
JOSE ANTONIO PIGNA'S ROLE AS A BOEING AGENT TOUCHED OFF A
FLURRY OF MEDIA SPECULATION AND DENIALS IN CARACAS. THE MEDIA
HAS CONNECTED THE INVESTIGATION WITH THE GOV'S DECISION TO
PURCHASE A BOEING 737 AS A PRESIDENTIAL JET. PIGNA, AN
ADMITTED PAID AGENT OF BOEING, IS DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS FOR VENEZUELA'S MAJORITY GOV OWNED
INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE, VIASA (WHICH OWNS NO BOEING AIRCRAFT).
MCDONALD-DOUGLAS ALSO SHARED THE GLARE WHEN A COMMITTEE OF
THE VENEZUELAN CONGRESS OPENED AN INVESTIATION OF GOV OWNED
AEROPOSTAILS PURCHAS OF SIX NEW DC-9S.

7. WEALTHY RANCHER/LAWYER KIDNAPPED IN TACHIRA.

ACCORDING TO PRESS, ON DECEMBER 11 ELEVEN MEN, NINE IN
MILITARY DRESS, KIDNAPPED A WEALTHY VENEZUELAN RANCHER/
LAWYER, RICARDO LOPEZ SANCHEZ, NEAR SAN CRISTOBAL,
TACHIRA STATE, CLOSE TO THE COLOMBIAN BORDER. THE KID-
NAPPERS ASKED FOR A BS 1 MILLION RANSOM. MINISTER OF
INTERIOR LEPAGE STATED THAT THE GOV IS NOT PREPARED TO
FACILITATE SUCH A PAYMENT. A JOINT POLICE-MILITARY SEARCH
OPERATION IS UNDERWAY IN THE MOUNTAINOUS AREA, AND THE
POICE HAVE FOUND SOME CLUES. INTERIOR MINISTER LEPAGE HAS
CONFIRMED THAT THE COLOMBIAN POLICE ARE COOPERATING IN THE

SEARCH. BOTH THE DEFENSE AND INTERIOR MINISTERS INSIST PUBLICLY THAT ALL AVAILABLE EVIDENCE INDICATES THERE IS NO POLITICAL MOTIVATION TO THE KIDNAPPING.

8. COLOMBIAN ARMY COMMANDER VISITS. THE COMMANDER OF THE COLOMBIAN ARMY, GENERAL LUIS CARLOS CAMACHO LEYVA, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ARRIVED IN CARACAS DEC 14 FOR A FOUR-DAY VISIT. CAMACHO TOLD PRESS THERE IS NO DANGER OF DESTABILIZATION OF THE GOC, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE SOME PUBLIC ORDER PROBLEMS WHICH THE MILITARY HAS UNDER CONTROL. CAMACHO EMPHASIZED THAT THE FRONTIER SITUATION IS NORMAL AND THAT THE COLOMBIAN ARMY MAINTAINS GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH THE VENEZUELAN ARMY AND THE VENEZUELAN NATIONAL GUARD. THE VISIT IS APPARENTLY PROTOCOLARY IN NATURE, ALTHOUGH ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AND CONTRABAND ARE ALMOST CERTAINLY BEING DISCUSSED. CAMACHO'S VISIT FOLLOWS THAT OF THE COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE COMMANDER WHO PARTICIPATED IN VENEZUELAN AIR FORCE DAY CELEBRATIONS DECEMBER 10.

9. OTHER REPORTING THIS WEEK INCLUDED MINES MINISTER HERNANDEZ' STATEMENT ON OPEC PRICE HIKE (CARACAS 14475), THE OPEC MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE (CARACAS 14445), VENEZUELA'S REQUEST FOR ENRICHED URANIUM FUEL (CARACAS 14499), AND ANALYSIS OF THE TAX REFORM BILL (CARACAS A-162), REVIEW OF PERUVIAN PRESIDENT'S VISIT (CARACAS 14513), THE AD PRESIDENTIAL RACE (CARACAS A-165), AND REPORTS ON UK-US BILATERAL CIVIL AIR TALKS (CARACAS 14574) AND FAA TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (CARACAS 14529).

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